

Chrysanthemum plant named 'ATHENA'

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

'Athena' is a product of a breeding and selection program for outdoor pot mums (garden mums) which had the objective of creating new chrysanthemum cultivars with a decorative type flower, a natural season flower date around September 15 - 20 ; blooming for a period of 5 weeks. The new plant of the present invention comprises a new and distinct cultivar of Chrysanthemum plant 'Athena' is a seedling resulting from the open pollination among groups of chrysanthemum cultivars maintained under the control of the inventor for breeding purposes. The new and distinct cultivar was discovered and selected as one flowering plant by Mark Roland Boeder on a cultivated field in Rijssenhou Holland in September 2001. The plant has been asexually reproduced by cuttings in greenhouses at Rijssenhou Holland. The new cultivar has been found to retain its distinctive characteristics through successive propagations.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention of a new and distinct variety of chrysanthemum is shown in the accompanying drawings, the color being as nearly true as possible with color photographs of this type.

FIG. 1 shows a plant of the cultivar in full bloom.

FIG. 2 shows the various stages of bloom and foliage of the new cultivar.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

This new variety of chrysanthemum is of the botanical classification *Chrysanthemum morifolium*. The observations and measurements were gathered from plants grown out door in Rijssenhou, Holland under natural day length and temperature and planted in week 23 in 2002. The natural blooming date of this crop was September 15 – 20 (week 38). The average height of the plants was 35 cms. No growth retardants were used. No tests were done on disease or insect resistance or susceptibility. No tests were done on cold or drought tolerance. This new variety produces medium sized blooms with pink ray florets and a salmon center blooming for a period of 5 weeks.

From the cultivars known to inventor the most similar existing cultivar in comparison to 'Athena' is 'Cefreya' (U.S. plant patent application 10/316,870). When 'Cefreya' and 'Athena' are being compared the following differences are noticed: The differences of 'Cefreya' and 'Athena' are (1) Flower colour. The ray-florets of 'Cefreya' are salmon colored, while those of 'Athena' are pink. (2) Longitudinal axis of majority of ray-florets. The ray-florets of 'Cefreya' show a reflexing to twisted curvature, while those of 'Athena' are straight.

The following is a description of the plant and characteristics that distinguish 'Athena' as a new and distinct variety.

The color designations are taken from the plant itself. Accordingly, any discrepancies between the color designations and the colors depicted in the photographs are due to photographic tolerances. The color chart used in this description is: The Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart, edition 1995.

Table 1. Botanical Description of cultivar 'Athena'

Bud

Size	small ;cross-section 1 cm, height 0.5 cm
Outside Color	Yellow-green 148D
Involucral bracts	2 rows, length 7 mm, width 3 mm
Involucral bracts among disc-florets	Not present
Involucral bracts color	Green 138B

Bloom

Type	Decorative
Size	Medium
Fully Expanded	5 cm
Peduncle length	7 cm
Peduncle color	Green 138C
Number of blooms per branch	Approx. 9 blooms per branch
Performance on the plant	5 weeks
Seeds	Produced in small quantities, ovate grey-brown 199A, 1½ mm in length.
Fragrance	Typical chrysanthemum, slightly

Color

Center of the flower	Immature Orange-red 31D Mature Orange-red 31D
Color of upper surface of the ray-florets	Red 55C

Color of the lower surface of the ray-florets	Red 38D
Tonality from Distance	A garden mum with pink flowers and a salmon disc
Color of upper surface of ray-florets after aging of the plant	Red 55C

Ray florets

Texture	Upper and under side smooth
Number	150 - 170
Cross-section	Flat
Longitudinal axis of majority	Straight
Length of corolla tube	0.5 cm
Ray-floret margin	Entire
Ray-floret length	3 cm
Ray-floret width	0.8 cm
Ratio length / width	medium
Shape of tip	Rounded

<u>Disc florets</u>	Absent
Receptacle shape	Domed raised

Reproductive Organs

Stamen	Absent
Pollen	Not produced

Styles	Thin
Style color	Yellow 13A
Style Length	3 mm
Stigma color	Yellow-green 144A

Stigma Width	1 mm
Ovaries	Enclosed in calyx

Plant

Form	A garden mum outdoor mounded and round
Growth habit	Round and spreading
Growth rate	Intermediate
Height	35 cm
Width	40 cm
Stem Color	Green 138C
Stem Strength	Weak
Stem Brittleness	Brittle
Stem Anthocyanin Coloration	Absent
Internode length	2 cm
Length of lateral branch	From top to bottom 16 cm
Lateral branch color	Green 138B
Lateral branch, attachment	Weak
Branching (average number of lateral branches)	Good with 7-8 breaks after pinching
Natural season blooming date	September 15 - 20

Foliage

Leaf color	Upper side Green 137A
	Under side Green 137D
Color midvein	Upper side Yellow-green 148D
	Under side Yellow-green 147D
Size	Small; length 4 cm, width 3 cm
Quantity (number per lateral branch)	20
Shape	Cordiform
Texture upper side	Glabrous
Texture under side	Pubescent
Venation arrangement	Palmate
Shape of the margin	Serrated
Shape of Base of Sinus Between Lateral Lobes	Rounded
Margin of Sinus Between Lateral Lobes	Diverging
Shape of Base	Obtuse
Apex	Mucronate
Petiole length	1 cm
Petiole color	Yellow-green 148D

Table 2. Differences with the comparison variety

	'Athena'	'Cefreya'
Color ray-florets	Red 55C	Red 37B
Longitudinal axis of ray-florets	Straight	Reflexing to twisted